CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1   1. A method for accessing information, the method comprising:

2   sending a query to a first set of users accessible by a first user, the query

3   including information relevant to a request for information; and

4   receiving a response to the query from a second user, the second user a

5   member of the first set of users, the response including information responsive to the

6   query, the information accessible in a public portion of a system.

1   2. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

2   providing the response from information accessible in a public portion of a

3   system controlled at least in part by the second user.

1   3. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

2   forwarding the query to a second set of users, each user of the second set of

3   users accessible by the second user;

4   receiving a response from a third user, the third user a member of the second

5   set of users, the response including information responsive to the query from a public

6   portion of a system; and

7   forwarding the response to the first user.

1   4. The method of claim 3 further comprising:

2   adding the third user to the first set of users.

1   5. The method of claim 3 wherein:

2   the second set of users dynamically formed such that the second set of users

3 has no intersection with the first set of users.

1   6. The method of claim 5 wherein:

2   The query includes a list of users known to have had the query sent to each user

3 of the list of users.

1   7. The method of claim 3 wherein:

2   the query includes a timestamp indicating when the query was originated and

3 further comprising discarding queries received at a time later than the timestamp plus a

4 predetermined length of time.

1   8. A system comprising:

2   a processor;

3   a control hub coupled to the processor;

4   a network interface coupled to the control hub;

5   a memory coupled to the processor;

6   a first logic block configured to receive a query;

7   a second logic block configured to transmit a query; and

8   a third logic block configured to check a public file system for information

9   responsive to a query.

1   9. The system of claim 8 further comprising:

2   a fourth logic block configured to interface with a user; and

3   a fifth logic block configured to maintain a group of users and corresponding

4   addresses.

1   10. A system comprising:

2   means for sending a query to a first set of users accessible by a first user, the

3   query including information relevant to a request for information; and

4   means for receiving a response to the query from a second user, the second

5   user a member of the first set of users, the response including information responsive

6   to the query, the information accessible in a public portion of a system.

1   11. The system of claim 10 further comprising:

2   means for providing the response from information accessible in a public portion

3   of a system controlled at least in part by the second user.

1   12. The system of claim 11 further comprising:

2   means for Forwarding the query to a second set of users, each user of the

3   second set of users accessible by the second user;

4   means for Receiving a response from a third user, the third user a member of

5   the second set of users, the response including information responsive to the query

6   from a public portion of a system; and

7   the means for providing including Means for Forwarding the response from the

8   third user to the first user.

1   13. The system of claim 12 further comprising:

2   means for adding the third user to the first set of users.

1   14. A machine-readable medium embodying instructions for execution by a

2   processor, the instructions, when executed by the processor, causing the processor to

3   perform a method, the method comprising:

4   sending a query to a first set of users accessible by a first user, the query

5   including information relevant to a request for information; and

6   receiving a response to the query from a second user, the second user a

7   member of the first set of users, the response including information responsive to the

8   query, the information accessible in a public portion of a system.

1   15. The machine-readable medium of claim 14 further embodying instructions for

2   execution by a processor, the instructions, when executed by the processor, causing

3   the processor to perform a method, the method further comprising:

4   providing the response from information accessible in a public portion of a

5   system controlled at least in part by the second user.

1   16. The machine-readable medium of claim 15 further embodying instructions for

2   execution by a processor, the instructions, when executed by the processor, causing

3   the processor to perform a method, the method further comprising:

4   forwarding the query to a second set of users, each user of the second set of

5   users accessible by the second user;

6   receiving a response from a third user, the third user a member of the second

7   set of users, the response including information responsive to the query from a public

8   portion of a system; and

9   forwarding the response to the first user.

1   17. The machine-readable medium of claim 16 further embodying instructions for

2   execution by a processor, the instructions, when executed by the processor, causing

3   the processor to perform a method, the method further comprising:

4   adding the third user to the first set of users.

1   18. The machine-readable medium of claim 17 further embodying instructions for

2   execution by a processor, the instructions, when executed by the processor, causing

3   the processor to perform a method, wherein:

4   the second set of users dynamically formed such that the second set of users

5   has no intersection with the first set of users; and

6   the query includes a list of users known to have had the query sent to each user

7   of the list of users.

1   19. The machine-readable medium of claim 17 further embodying instructions for

2   execution by a processor, the instructions, when executed by the processor, causing

3   the processor to perform a method, wherein:

4   the query includes a timestamp indicating when the query was originated and

5   further comprising discarding queries received at a time later than the timestamp plus a

6   predetermined length of time.
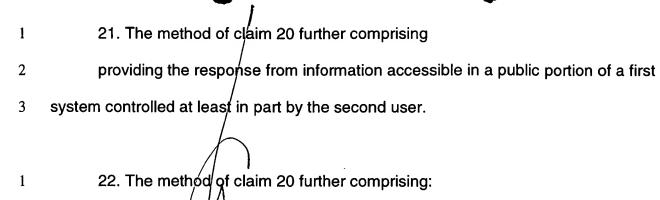

1   20. A method of providing information from a second user comprising:

2   Receiving a query from a first user, the query including information relevant to a

3   request for information; and

4   Sending a response to the query, the response including information responsive

5   to the query, the information accessible in a public portion of a system.

1   21. The method of claim 20 further comprising

2   providing the response from information accessible in a public portion of a first

3 system controlled at least in part by the second user.

1   22. The method of claim 20 further comprising:

2   forwarding the query to a set of users, each user of the set of users accessible

3 by the second user;

4   receiving a response from a third user, the third user a member of the set of

5 users, the response including information responsive to the query from a public portion

6 of a second system; and

7   forwarding the response to the first user.